

Available online at www.sciencedirect.com

ScienceDirect

Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences 127 (2014) 386 – 391

Procedia
Social and Behavioral Sciences

PSIWORLD 2013

Study regarding the motivation of the aerobic gymnastics team members of the "Vasile Alecsandri" University of Bacau

Tatiana Dobrescu^a, Lucian Dobreci^b, Gloria Rață^{c*}^{a,b,c} "Vasile Alecsandri" University of Bacau, 157, Calea Marasesti, Bacau, 600115, Romania

Abstract

The aim of this research is to determine, through a socio-psychological approach, the elements that influence the athlete's motivation, by discovering the best sources acting on the individual engaged in athletic activity. The study was conducted between January and March 2012, on a group of 15 female gymnasts aged 21-23, members of the aerobic gymnastics team of the "Vasile Alecsandri" University of Bacau. The results of the research contributed to identifying the useful characteristics for the female gymnasts in the practice of aerobics, and for the selection of the right athletes for the university's representative team.

© 2014 The Authors. Published by Elsevier Ltd. Open access under [CC BY-NC-ND license](#).

Selection and peer-review under responsibility of Romanian Society of Applied Experimental Psychology.

Keywords: motivation; aerobic gymnastics; selection; representative team.

1. Introduction

Starting from the characteristics of aerobics, and from the ever increasing demands for great successes, "the high athletic performance is conditioned not only by the physical and motor skills, but also the mental ones." (Epuran, 2008). The gymnasts have personality traits that are favorable to the specific activities, having an effective conduct regarding adaptation to stress and different demands, strong temperament, strong character, self-knowledge, and motivation. Aerobics demands from the athletes a very good memory, especially for the practical side of the activity,

* Corresponding author. Tel.: +40234517715; fax: +40234517715.

E-mail address: tatianadobrescu2002@yahoo.com

a great ability to focus their attention, will, self-confidence, without which they would not be capable to overcome the difficulties that can appear at a certain point during their athletic activity. (Dobrescu, 2005).

Even though the general belief is that athletic success is due to inborn skills, one must admit that the athletes' motivation plays an important part in achieving that success. Believed by Atkinson & Hilgard (2005, p. 507) to be "a state that energizes the behavior, offering it a direction, motivation is lived subjectively as a conscious desire" to do or to achieve something, to perfect oneself, to reach a certain goal. It refers to the mental process that includes needs, tendencies, intentions, desires, motives, interests, convictions, and that challenges, directs and supports certain behaviors in a person. A highly important motivation for athletes is recording a successful result, higher than their previous performances, aiming each time for a goal that is superior to the previous one. In order for the motivation to develop, the athletes must believe that they are "active agents" in the modification of their own behavior. (Vîjială, 2010). If this state is amplified also by other variables, such as material rewards, social advantages, etc., it can stimulate victory and determination to reach higher performances (Epuran, 2008).

Any experienced athlete can analyze and understand the essence and characteristics of a successful career through the individual psychological aspects (interior and social characteristics), in the context of the social implications and conditioning of the activity he or she is involved in. (Epuran, 2008).

2. Material and Methods

Starting from the statement by Roșca (1966), that "without the teacher knowing the students, their psychological particularities, he or she cannot organize and direct their perception, conduct, attention, nor he or she can predict their learning curve" (p. 439), we initiated this study in the higher education system.

The aim of this research is to determine, through a socio-psychological approach, the elements that influence the athlete's motivation, by discovering the best sources acting on the individual engaged in athletic activity.

The goals of the research were to identify the athletes' favorite motivational sources and their characteristic values, in order to determine the behavioral guidelines, the specific conducts, and their social adaptation. This way, one can obtain important information regarding the functioning of these essential personality elements within the inter-relational system. (Vîjială Ignat, 2010)

The research started from the idea that the motivated athlete (the female gymnast, in this case) takes part in the training process aiming to better herself, and implicitly to improve her competition results. For this, we elaborated the *research hypothesis* stating that the identification of the hierarchy of the needs and motives, this representing a way to know the female gymnasts, can direct the selection process in creating a university representative aerobic gymnastics team.

The study consisted in performing an inquiry of the whole team of aerobic gymnastics that will represent our institution at the National University Championship. The inquiry was based on the "*professional motivation questionnaire*," adapted by Roco (2001, p. 214-215), based on Bazin. This questionnaire assessed the needs and motives that the female gymnasts' behavior is based on during the training process, by ranging the 35 assertions in the order their importance, according to each subject. The points given by the respondents to each item offered us the possibility to analyze the motives within the 5 groups identified by the authors: physiology, security, social contacts, esteem, consideration, and self-accomplishment. The study was conducted between January and March 2012, on a group of 15 female gymnasts aged 21-23, members of the aerobic gymnastics team of the "Vasile Alecsandri" University of Bacau. In this study, we used the following *research methods*: the study of the professional literature, the observation, the inquiry, the statistical-mathematical method, and the graphical representation method. The normative evaluations lead to the assessment of the motivational psychological tendencies of the subjects, using the professional motivation questionnaire, adapted after Bazin (2001, p. 214-215).

3. Results and Discussions

In order to emphasize the needs and motives on which the manifestation of the target group is based, the results recorded in the 5 groups were interpreted taking into account the average, maximum, and minimum group and individual values. (Table 1)

Table 1. Centralization of the target group's statistical results for the motivation questionnaire

| Statistical markers | Groups of motives and needs | | | | |
|---------------------|-----------------------------|-------|--------|--------|--------|
| | Cs | Rs | S c | S | Fz |
| Arithmetical mean | 95.34 | 112 | 125.54 | 133.26 | 163.86 |
| Standard deviation | 10.79 | 19.44 | 20.04 | 17.12 | 29.73 |
| Maximum value | 108 | 154 | 161 | 165 | 200 |
| Minimum value | 70 | 72 | 95 | 106 | 105 |

The *social contacts* group of needs and motives was situated very high in the preferences of the inquired athletes, with an arithmetical mean of 95.34 points, a minimum value of 70 points and a maximum value of 108 points. These results prove that the subjects were preoccupied by social contacts, which is very important because the competition during the National University Championship is conducted on teams. In the order of their values, we have the motives and needs regarding *self-accomplishment*, with an average value of 112 points, a maximum value of 154 points, and a minimum value of 72 points. Thus, one can say that the persons in this group are creative and are characterized by qualities such as permanent adaptation to ever changing situations. In third place we have the group regarding *esteem and consideration*, with an average value of 125.54 points, a maximum value of 161 points, and a minimum value of 95 points, being followed by the need of *security*, with an average value of 133.26 points, a maximum value of 165, and a minimum value of 106 points. Finally, with the highest average value (163.86 points) were the *physiological* motives and needs, with a maximum value of 200 points, and a minimum value of 105 points.

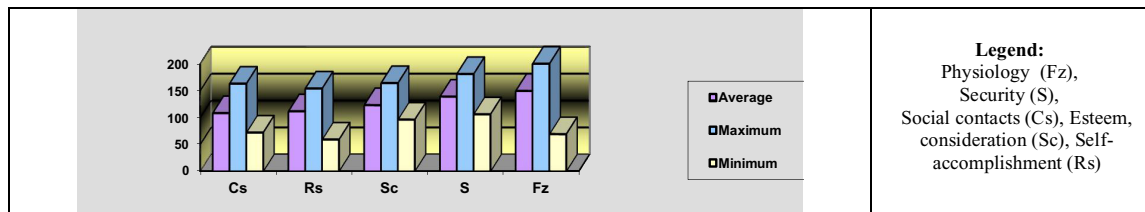


Figure 1. The average, maximum, and minimum results of professional motivation

The needs and motives regarding *social contacts* have individual values between 108 and 70 (Table 1 and Figure 2). The difference between the average and the minimum value of 25.34 points is higher than the one between the maximum value and the average, of 12.66 points, which proves that the female athletes are preoccupied by the way in which they relate in society, which will transmit also in the team training process. With the lowest score, the assertions for this item emphasizes the fact that the subjects respect themselves as persons, they prefer an institution with a good reputation, they want a good understanding and communication with their teammates during training, and they prefer a competent leader.

The group regarding *self-accomplishment* has individual values comprised between 154 and 72 points (Table 1 and Figure 3), and the difference between the minimum value and the average, of 40 points, is smaller than the one between the average and the maximum value, of 42 points, a tendency to go toward the average being observed.

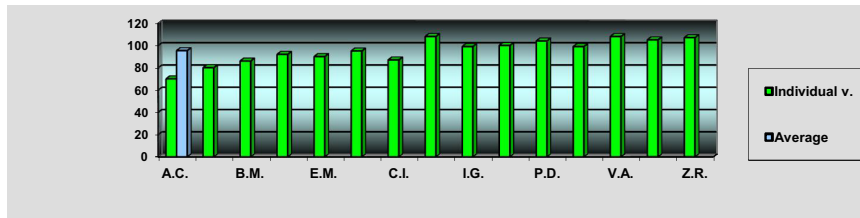


Figure 2. The social contacts (Cs) results

The second place position within the 5 groups of motives and needs supports the female gymnasts' predisposition toward creativity and adaptation in the training process. They prefer to take chances in what they are doing, to have possibilities of promotion in a stimulating and interesting activity, to agree with the goals, and to have opportunities for personal development.

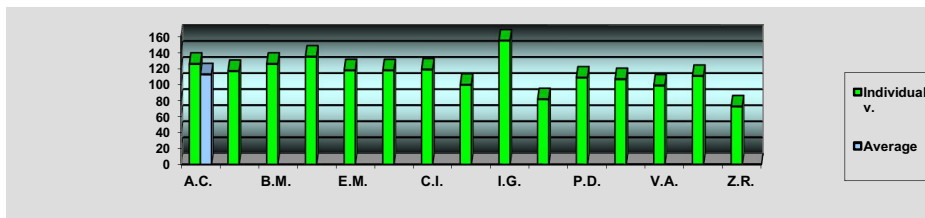


Figure 3. The self-accomplishment results

The needs and motives regarding *esteem and consideration* have individual values between 161 and 95 points (Table 1 and Figure 4), with the difference between the average and minimum value is of 30.54 points smaller than the one between the maximum and the average value, of 35.46 points. From the recorded results, one can see that the subjects are preoccupied by the possibility of performing a good training; they are marked by the sense of utility, but also by having freedom within the performed activity.

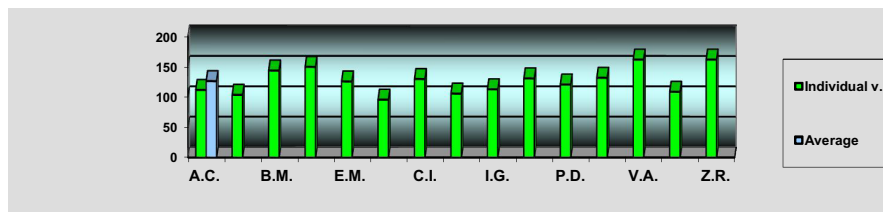


Figure 4. The esteem and consideration (Sc) results

The needs and motives regarding *security* have individual values between 165 and 106 points (Table 1 and Figure 5), with the difference between the average and minimum value is of 32.82 points, higher than the one between the maximum and the average value, of 27.26 points. Security is of a lower importance for the athletes, meaning that they do not fear an imposed working schedule, they do not tend to be leaders in the team, and they do not feel the necessity for a permanent guidance.

The needs and motives regarding **physiology** (Fz) have individual values between 200 and 69 points (Table 1 and Figure 6), with the difference between the average and minimum value is of 94.86 points, higher than the one between the maximum and the average value, of 36.14 points.

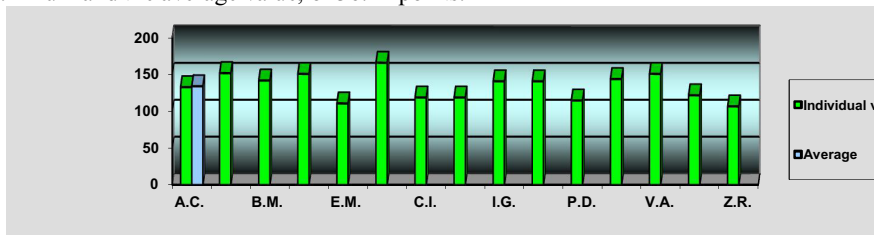


Figure 5. The security needs and motives results

The physiological motives are in the last place, but the high scores for these items prove that for the inquired female gymnasts, the rest and relaxation periods are not a priority, they do not require special conditions to work, a fix training schedule, or other advantages.

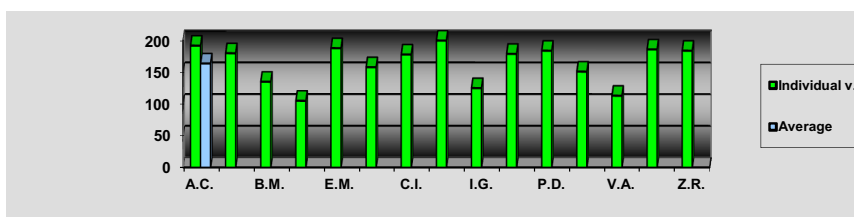


Figure 6. The physiological needs and motives results

The standard deviation (Table 1) recorded values between 29.73 and 10.79 points, values that are considered to be high, proving a low homogeneity degree of the group, a normal aspect.

4. Conclusions

In trying to find the best ways to determine what motivates the athletes in their activities, the scientists have written a series of theories and conducted countless researches.

We believe that this study constitutes a beneficial contribution for the current management of the sports institutions that confront the problem of athletes' motivation.

Understanding the athletes' mental structure through the sources that can motivate them the best during the training and competition activities allows the coaches and managers to approach training at an individual level, as a singular entity aiming to increase the motivation for the training process, and implicitly, for achieving high performances during competitions.

The results of the research contributed to identifying the useful characteristics for the female gymnasts in the practice of aerobics, and for the selection of the right athletes for the university's representative team.

After analyzing and interpreting the results, one can see that the research hypothesis was confirmed, hence we can say that the identification of the hierarchy of the needs and motives, this representing a way to know the female gymnasts, can direct the selection process in creating a university representative aerobic gymnastics team.

The value of this research has been already certified by the result obtained by the 6 female gymnasts, members of the "Vasile Alecsandri" University of Bacau aerobic gymnastics team, selected from the target group, who, during the 2012 Bucharest National University Championships, have won the golden medal and the top title.

References

- Atkinson R.L., & Hilgard E.R. (2005). *Introducere în psihologie. 14th Edition*. Bucuresti: Technical Publishing House, Romania,
- Dobrescu, T. (2005). *Modelarea în gimnastica aerobică de performanță*, Iași: Tehnopress Publishing House.
- Epuran, M. Holdevici, I., Tonița, F. (2008). *Psihologia Sportului de performanță, Teorie și Practică*. Bucuresti: FEST Publishing House.
- Roco, M. (2001). *Creativitate și inteligență emoțională*. Iași: Polirom Publishing House.
- Roșca A. (1966). *Psihologie generală*, Bucuresti: Didactic and Pedagogical Publishing House.
- Vijială (Ignat) M. (2010). *Dimensiuni ale personalității și specificul motivațional la sportivii de performanță*. (Unpublished doctoral dissertation). Universitatea Bucuresti.